



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas



Rendezvous record

STS-80 sets record for duration and multiple orbiting spacecraft. Photos on Page 3.



Dress rehearsal

The STS-81 crew was in Florida this week for the Terminal Countdown Demonstration Test. Story on Page 4.

Space News Roundup

Vol. 34

December 20, 1996

No. 49



*Seasons
Greetings*

from the
Director

This has been a very active and successful year for the center and a year that brought new programmatic responsibilities for the Space Shuttle and Space Station Programs, as well as Extra Vehicular Activities and consolidated Space Operations.

While assessing our new roles, we flew seven very successful shuttle missions. These missions have demonstrated our ability to fly safely, accomplish excellent science, and develop the technologies and operational techniques necessary to build the International Space Station. Several missions demonstrated the growing international involvement in our programs, a necessary component of our future plans. The announcement in December of the STS-86 crew, which includes members from France and Russia, highlights our commitment to a space program that reaches beyond our nation's borders. We also have started the transition of Space Operations over to private enterprise with United Space Alliance assumption of these responsibilities in October.

We also are making significant strides in realizing our goals of building the International Space Station. Despite a number of technical and managerial challenges, with hard work and dedication of all the people involved in the program, we have made great progress. Our favorable Phase 1 activities are providing the foundation necessary to attain our space station goals. Shannon Lucid's flight with her Russian colleagues is great testimony to our progress and started a succession of missions that has established an American permanent presence in Earth's orbit.

We are working on a new space vehicle—the X-38—which will be our first new piloted spacecraft since the shuttle. We're establishing a Biomedical Research Institute, that will allow us to partner with others in conducting the human life science research necessary to conduct long-term space flight.

The news this year of the discovery of possible signs of life in a Mars meteorite by research scientists here at JSC has sparked the imagination of people around the world. Our collection of asteroid and lunar samples and meteorites has brought renewed attention to JSC as the center for research that will lead to a better understanding of the universe we live in.

This year we have made significant progress in reaching out to the community. Our Open House and Inspection efforts were very well done, and very well received. The "Longhorn Project"—a cooperative effort with the Clear Creek

Independent School District, the Texas Department of Agriculture, and Texas Longhorn breeders—will bring together the space program and agriculture and farming interests in an unprecedented partnership. Our new Emergency Operations Center, which will further add to our ability to provide a safe

Please see **DIRECTOR**, Page 4